1 April 1976

Dear Harold:

Not much to send along, but this needs to be written and on its way to you to give you some idea of what is ahead for us and that necessarily our activities are going to have to be drastically curtailed, even more than we already have curtailed them, at least for a time.

We had our physical checkups with our local physician some 10 days ago and both were in tiptop condition except that he found a small tumor in Jenifer's rectum. He shot her over to a specialist the next day who does nothing but rectal surgery, and the opinion of both doctors was that it was a typical malignancy. A biopsy taken by the specialist confirmed the malignancy yesterday. In any case, it will have to be removed, so she will enter Marin General Hospital this Sunday for preparation and be operated on next Wednesday, April 7. The specialist will handle it. Our own physician swears by him and says he's not only the best in Marin County but one of the best in the country, with people coming to him from all over. We feel lucky to have these two.

As you know, Jenifer was a surgical secretary in Peking for 10 years and of course is much better prepared to understand all that is involved than most people. She naturally doesn't look forward to the consequences of this particular operation, which is a long and serious one but basically routine. She is in excellent condition and is entirely confident, as am I, particularly since both doctors show every confidence that the cancer is still local and should not have spread. A proctoscopy showed no sign that it had. We'll know a bit better about that after a barium enema which she'll have Friday, April 2, for an x-ray survey. She may be in the hospital up to three weeks because of the extensive surgery that has to be done, recovery, and instructions on how to manage the new plumbing arrangements that will be made. I won't go into these now; perhaps you know. Mae can fill you in if you don't. In any case, Jenifer is entirely confident she can live with the new set up and can think of a lot of things, such as blindness, or some really disabling affliction, which would be far, far worse.

It goes without saying that we've had a million things to take care of since we got the word, so I shan't take more time now except to say that the cats and I are by now quite well briefed on how to run the house while Jenifer is in the hospital, and we've got pratically everything taken care of that needs it before she leaves it to our dubious talents. I'll have no trouble feeding myself and keeping things clean and tidy.

In the meantime I did want to let you know what's coming up and to do it in a way which will impinge as little as possible on your own troubles. We ask only your and Lil's best wishes and know they're automatic. The important thing is not to let this add to your own problems in any way. We are in excellent shape to handle this and expect nothing short of success. I'll keep you advised of progress, the important things, anyway.

Best from us both,

Jenifer

jdw

P.S. -- SHE says no get well cards or other unseemly demonstrations will be tolerated.